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XAAZ-28833

19 Nov 49 #7

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19 Nov

Hildebrandt's "Kampfgruppe Gegen Unmenschlichkeit" (CLASSIFICATION: SECRET)

Fighting Front Against Inhumanity

Number 2 Ernst Ringstrasse in the US Sector of Berlin, office of the Kampfgruppe Gegen Unmenschlichkeit (Fighting Group Against Inhumanity), is rapidly becoming a well-known address for people who have suffered at the hands of the Russians in the Eastern Zone. Every day the house is filled with men and women who have lost a relative somewhere in the East and hope to locate this person with the aid of the Kampfgruppe. While this service is one of the most important contributions of the Kampfgruppe, it by no means exhausts the list of activities sponsored by the group. These may be found in their official program which lists the following purposes of the organization:

1. Exposure of all crimes against humanity no matter by whom or where they were perpetrated.
2. Giving widest publicity to all crimes against humanity no matter which country is responsible for the same.
3. Institution of a search service for persons who have been arrested or kidnapped in the Soviet Zone.
4. Giving advice and support to refugees or other victims of inhumanity from the Soviet Zone.
5. Documentation of crimes against humanity.
6. Support of all persons who use political means in keeping up resistance against the reign of terror which exists in Eastern Germany.

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Background of the Kampfgruppe

The idea of constituting such a group first arose in the summer of 1948 when a number of concentration camp inmates were amnestied. It occurred to Dr. Hildebrandt, the originator of the Kampfgruppe, that if these persons told of their experiences in the camps they would call the world's attention to the fact that concentration camps still exist. It was Hildebrandt's contention that the concentration camps under Hitler might never have developed so extensively if they had been sufficiently exposed at the formative stage.

In August 1948, Dr. Hildebrandt arranged with the Demokratischer Jugend Verband to hold a rally under the motto: "Schweigen ist Selbstmord" (to remain silent is suicide). Former concentration camp victims spoke on this occasion. The rally reached a large audience by being broadcast over RIAS and the MVR. Immediately requests poured in for additional information about the camps, especially about individuals in the camps. To answer these inquiries, an office was established at 4 Hoehmann Strasse in December 1948. The volunteers who served in this office banded themselves together in the "Kampfgruppe". On 24 April 1949 the Kampfgruppe took the next step and was officially licensed by the Kommandantura as a political group "in Greater Berlin". Very recently the Kampfgruppe started to organize

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in the west. The central office is located at Goettingen in the British Zone and is led by Dr. Avoizur Muehlen. It is also reported that a group has been started in Hoi (US Zone) which is directed by Kurt Greulich.

Dr. Hildebrandt *COPEN*

A word should be said about Dr. Rainer Hildebrandt, the youthful originator and present head of the Kampfgruppe. The high points of his early life include: study at the "progressive" Waldorfschule, devotion to Albrecht Haushofer, (see Hildebrandt's book: Wir sind die Letzten), and imprisonment for 17 months by the Gestapo on suspicion of high treason. Before starting the Kampfgruppe he was unknown. Hildebrandt has a penchant for publicity and manages to keep his name in the foreground whenever the Kampfgruppe is mentioned. By nature he seems more drawn to artists, musicians, and intellectuals generally than to former concentration camp victims. He belongs to the Berlin "Liga fuer Geistesfreiheit" which is composed largely of university men, poets, actors and the like. The head of the Liga, Dr. Guenther Birkenfeld, is a co-licensee of the Kampfgruppe. In August of this year four persons were arrested for attempting to kidnap Dr. Hildebrandt. There is no doubt that the Russians would like to have him.

The Berlin office of the Kampfgruppe now has a staff of 22 volunteer workers. A large percentage of these volunteers have themselves spent some time in Soviet Zone concentration camps, which accounts for the long hours which some of them are willing to put in at the office.

There are at present three main departments in the Kampfgruppe: the search service, the records section, and the advisory group.

The Search Service

The search service was the first to be established and began operations in January 1949. It is run by Fraeulein Ruthreith, former inmate of a concentration camp. There are two types of files. One contains the names of persons being sought; relatives either appear personally in Berlin or write in, giving all data they have, including a photograph, of the person who is missing. They also include their own address. In the case of persons from the eastern zone, a western zone address is arranged to prevent arousing any suspicion. This file now contains 15,112 names.

The other file of the search service contains the names of all persons known to be or to have been in a concentration camp or prison. These names are obtained from persons who have been released or who have escaped from one of the camps. Each card contains a code name of the person who supplied the information. The list of informants is available to only three persons in the office. The file now contains 11,485 names.

As soon as a new name or new information on an old name is made available, the Kampfgruppe goes through the file of names of persons being sought and, if a card is found, that person is notified.

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If the informant is willing, an arrangement for a personal interview is made so that further details can be ascertained. In case no card is hand in the file of persons being sought, the name of the identified person, if deceased, is broadcast over RIAS. This station includes such names in a special broadcast heard Mondays and Thursdays at 0045 to 0100. These names are also reprinted in the Neue Zeitung, Berlin edition.

To date, the names of 2,231 concentration camp victims or inmates have been communicated to persons who were looking for information about them. The names of 2,680 persons have been broadcast over the radio.

The Records Section

The second department is concerned with keeping a careful record of all information that has been uncovered by the Kampfgruppe. While records have been kept from the very beginning, the department was not organized on a scientific basis until a certain Mr. Urban set it up in September of this year. All information is now cataloged according to four main categories: name, location, special group, and topic. It is the purpose of this department to supply basic information for Kampfgruppe speeches, broadcasts, newspaper releases, pamphlets, and books. It is also intended to produce documentary proof of atrocities which have been and are being committed in Eastern zone concentration camps. A careful record is being kept of all Soviet officials and their conduct in the camps as well as a list of German Spitzel (informers) operating either inside of the camps or causing the arrest of Germans in the Eastern zone.

Aid to Victims

A third department, led by Siegfried Schultz, was organized in February 1949 to give advice and aid to victims of inhumanity from the Eastern zone. His chief function is to remain in contact with official and private welfare agencies in order to arrange special assistance to persons deserving aid. Since the means of Berlin welfare agencies are very limited, the Kampfgruppe is anxious to provide direct relief to persons who have lost everything as a result of opposing the Soviet regime in Eastern Germany. The Kampfgruppe also wishes to help the immediate members of families in the Eastern Zone where the head of the family has been taken away by NKVD agents.

What might be called an operations section is headed by a certain Heinrich Hoffmann. He conducts all important interrogations of former concentration camp inmates. He also maintains close contact with persons in the Soviet Zone who have volunteered to work for the Kampfgruppe. One might say that he is building up an underground resistance movement in the Soviet Zone. Hoffmann is largely responsible for the distribution of "F" (for freedom) literature in the Soviet Zone. His workers also paint the F symbol at prominent places in the zone and supply the Kampfgruppe with names and addresses of Spitzel, which are then broadcast over RIAS to warn other Germans.

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Publicity

Eventually the Kampfgruppe intends to create a press section, but at present Mr. Hildebrandt is taking care of this field. The Group has been very active in spreading information about conditions in the Eastern zone. Most of the press releases appear in the form of a brief statement. Longer articles usually describe mass meetings put on by the Kampfgruppe. Pamphlets include: "Auch das ist Deutschland" (That too is Germany) and "Auch ich wahlte die Freiheit" (I too Chose Freedom). Both contain detailed information on Soviet Zone concentration camps. A four-page propaganda sheet intended primarily for the Soviet Zone bears the title: "Widerstand! Ein Wort an die Unterdrueckten der Ostzone" (Resistance! A Word to the Oppressed in the Soviet Zone) which calls for active political resistance to the totalitarian East Zone government. In the near future Mr. Hildebrandt plans to write a book similar to Kogen's "SS Staat" on Soviet Zone concentration camps.

Financial Support

In his application for the Kampfgruppe license Mr. Hildebrandt mentioned that the only source of funds is from a slight charge made for the search service (1.00 RM per person) and money obtained from publications. It is believed that the city government, through its welfare department, also makes some contributions. Recently CRALOG was asked to assist the Kampfgruppe by making food packages available. It would seem desirable, if further aid is given the Kampfgruppe from American sources, that a way be found to determine the total income of the Kampfgruppe from all known sources and that a system be set up for a regular accounting of the same. While there is no reason at present to suspect that funds are going into private hands, the present loose system readily lends itself to abuse.

Future of the Kampfgruppe

The Kampfgruppe, in spite of its uncertain financial status, is a growing operation which is capable of expansion in several directions. One possibility, which it is now actively promoting, is that it may become an information service of the Bonn government, specifically for the Ministry of All-German Affairs (Ministerium für gesamt-deutsche Fragen). Another possibility is that it may develop into a Soviet Zone underground with the purpose of bringing about a united Germany. A third possibility, which is suggested by the first two Kampfgruppe principles mentioned above, is that the Kampfgruppe might at some later date enlarge on its present scope in the Eastern zone and espouse the cause, for example, of the expellees from the East who would be described as living under inhumane conditions in Western Germany, with the obvious implication that the US is largely at fault. There is no reason to believe that the Kampfgruppe is particularly friendly to the US. Essentially it is composed of Germans whose primary interest is their own country and who would not hesitate in the least to use the charge of "inhumanity" as a political weapon directed against the US. At the present time, however, the Kampfgruppe is a useful instrument in the Eastern struggle against Communism.

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